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SUBJECT: EGYPT: 2007 COUNTRY REPORT ON TERRORISM

REF: STATE 146856

Egypt

¶1. Egypt is an ally in the Global War on Terrorism. The Egyptian and U.S. governments maintained a robust dialogue on a broad range of counter-terrorism and law enforcement issues in 2007 and exchanged information on a variety of terrorism, security, and law enforcement matters during the course of the year. In 2007, the U.S. hosted the third session of the US-Egypt Counter-Terrorism Joint Working Group, and the next meeting of the group will likely be held in 2008 in Cairo.

¶2. There were no successful terrorist attacks in Egypt in 2007 due mainly to the vigilance and effectiveness of Egypt's security services.

¶3. During 2007, the imprisoned former leader of Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Sayid Imam al-Sharif, issued a detailed "revision" of his previous ideology of violent jihad. His revised approach to jihad does not amount to a rejection of the concept, but an attempt to establish "rules of engagement" for conducting jihad, while also offering non-violent alternatives.

¶4. The Egyptian government's active opposition to Islamist terrorism, and effective intelligence and security services, makes Egypt an unattractive locale for terror groups. There is no evidence of active foreign terrorist groups in the country. However, Egypt's northern Sinai region is a base for the smuggling of arms and explosives into Gaza, and a transit point for Gazan Palestinians. Palestinian officials from Hamas have also carried large amounts of cash across the border. The smuggling of weapons and other contraband through the Sinai into Israel and the Gaza Strip has created criminal networks that may be associated with terror groups in the region. The apparent recent radicalization of some Sinai Bedouin may possibly be linked in part to these smuggling networks and Egyptian efforts to dismantle them.

¶5. In the past four years, Egypt has tightened its terror finance regulations in keeping with relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. Egypt passed strong anti-money laundering legislation in 2002, established a financial intelligence unit in 2003, and ratified the latest UN Convention to Combat Terror Finance in 2005. The government of Egypt also keeps up open, regular lines of communication with U.S. Embassy officials concerning terrorist finance information. Egypt maintained its strengthened airport security measures and security for the Suez Canal, and continued to institute more stringent port security measures.

¶6. The Egyptian judicial system does not allow plea bargaining, and terrorists have historically been prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Terrorism defendants may be

tried in military tribunals or emergency courts. In terms of evidence for counter-terrorism cases in the U.S., the judicial system is cooperative in the framework of the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty. A formal mechanism exists for the United States to request from Egypt evidence which can be used in American courts.

¶7. Many of the Egyptian president's far-reaching powers in the realm of counter-terrorism come from a decades-old Emergency Law, which was renewed by Parliament for two years in 2006. President Mubarak has pledged to lift the Emergency Law by June 2008 and has called for new anti-terrorism legislation to replace the Emergency Law, noting that Egypt should follow the example of other countries that have recently passed comprehensive laws to combat terrorism. Such legislation is currently being drafted by a governmental interagency committee and will be considered by Egypt's Parliament in early 2008.

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